

The ongoing Baltic dilemma remains an unresolved legacy of the Stalin era. However, the democratic reawakening in Lithuania offers hope that popular aspirations for political, economic, and social justice will be realized.

The brave men and women of Lithuania began to pursue just and noble goals on the 16th of February, 1918. We reaffirm our support and admiration for the Lithuanian people as we recall the significance of that date today—the 72nd anniversary of Lithuanian independence.

In recognition of the aspirations of freedom-loving people in all nations, the Congress, by House Joint Resolution 149, has designated February 16, 1990, as "Lithuanian Independence Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 16, 1990, as Lithuanian Independence Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities in reaffirmation of their devotion to the principles of democracy and freedom throughout the world.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

**Editorial note:** For the statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on Lithuanian independence, dated Mar. 11, 1990, see the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (vol. 26, pp. 401, 444, 485).

## **Proclamation 6099 of February 21, 1990**

### **Save Your Vision Week, 1990**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

The loss of the precious gift of sight—at any age—is always tragic, but even more so when it could have been prevented.

Certain eye disorders in young children can interfere with the development of normal vision. Some of these problems are difficult to detect and may go unnoticed until they have caused significant, perhaps even permanent, damage. Therefore, it is essential that parents have their children's vision checked at or before age 3. The early discovery and prompt treatment of an eye problem can prevent visual loss that might otherwise be irreparable by the time a child reaches school age.

In adulthood, the estimated 11 million Americans who have diabetes are vulnerable to a potentially blinding eye disease known as diabetic retinopathy. People with diabetes often develop this condition, in which weakened blood vessels in the eye can cause severe vision loss

or blindness. Despite the availability of sight-saving treatments, diabetic retinopathy robs more middle-aged Americans of sight than any other eye disease. The surest way someone with diabetes can prevent loss of vision from diabetic retinopathy is by having an annual eye examination. With early diagnosis, diabetic retinopathy can be treated.

Open-angle glaucoma, the most common form of glaucoma in the United States, often appears in late middleage. Glaucoma can usually be controlled with medication. Tragically, however, it is still a leading cause of blindness among older individuals and Black Americans. Because glaucoma causes few if any symptoms in its early stages, millions of otherwise healthy people are unaware that they have the disease. That is why Black men and women, individuals with diabetes, and members of a family with a history of glaucoma should be especially diligent about seeking regular, comprehensive eye examinations.

Although eye diseases take their greatest toll on the vision of older men and women, the most common form, cataract, can be treated effectively. Today, removing a cataract and implanting a plastic lens is a highly successful and comparatively simple operation. Similarly, laser surgery can stop the severe loss of vision that results from an advanced form of age-related macular degeneration, an insidious disease that gradually destroys central vision. Proper timing of laser treatment, however, is very important if irretrievable loss of vision from this disease is to be prevented.

Because periodic eye examinations can lead to the detection and treatment of disorders and diseases that might otherwise pose a serious threat to one's vision, all Americans should make regular visits to their ophthalmologist or optometrist.

Seeking routine eye exams by a licensed professional is one of the best ways we can protect ourselves from needless vision loss. However, we can also protect our eyesight by taking a few simple precautions in the course of our daily activities. For example, goggles or some other form of protective eyewear should always be worn when handling potentially dangerous chemicals or machinery. Such safety gear should also be worn when participating in certain sports. Those Americans who wear contact lenses should always be certain to wear, clean, and handle them correctly, in accordance with the directions of their eye care professional. By following such simple steps, and by seeking periodic eye exams, each of us can safeguard one of our greatest blessings: the gift of sight.

To remind all Americans of the importance of proper eye care, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week of March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week of March 4 through March 10, 1990, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to participate in this observance by making eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives. I also invite eye care professionals, the communications media, and all public and private organizations committed to the goal of sight conservation to join in activities that will make Americans more aware of the steps they can take to protect their vision.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6100 of February 22, 1990

### International Year of Bible Reading, 1990

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### *A Proclamation*

Among the great books produced throughout the history of mankind, the Bible has been prized above all others by generations of men and women around the world—by people of every age, every race, and every walk of life.

The Bible has had a critical impact upon the development of Western civilization. Western literature, art, and music are filled with images and ideas that can be traced to its pages. More important, our moral tradition has been shaped by the laws and teachings it contains. It was a biblical view of man—one affirming the dignity and worth of the human person, made in the image of our Creator—that inspired the principles upon which the United States is founded. President Jackson called the Bible “the rock on which our Republic rests” because he knew that it shaped the Founding Fathers’ concept of individual liberty and their vision of a free and just society.

The Bible has not only influenced the development of our Nation’s values and institutions but also enriched the daily lives of millions of men and women who have looked to it for comfort, hope, and guidance. On the American frontier, the Bible was often the only book a family owned. For those pioneers living far from any church or school, it served both as a source of religious instruction and as the primary text from which children learned to read. The historic speeches of Abraham Lincoln and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., provide compelling evidence of the role Scripture played in shaping the struggle against slavery and discrimination. Today the Bible continues to give courage and direction to those who seek truth and righteousness. In recognizing its enduring value, we recall the words of the prophet Isaiah, who declared, “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.”

Containing revelations of God’s intervention in human history, the Bible offers moving testimony to His love for mankind. Treasuring the Bible as a source of knowledge and inspiration, President Abraham Lincoln called this Great Book “the best gift God has given to man.” President Lincoln believed that the Bible not only reveals the infinite goodness of our Creator, but also reminds us of our worth as individuals and our responsibilities toward one another.

President Woodrow Wilson likewise recognized the importance of the Bible to its readers. “The Bible is the word of life,” he once said. Describing its contents, he added: